

**The Book of Revelation**  
**Revelation 9:13-21 (NIV)**  
**“The Sixth Trumpet ”**

**Introduction**

**The sixth angel sounded his trumpet, and I heard a voice coming from the four horns of the golden altar that is before God. It said to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, “Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates.” And the four angels who had been kept ready for this very hour and day and month and year were released to kill a third of mankind. The number of the mounted troops was twice ten thousand times ten thousand. I heard their number.**

**The horses and riders I saw in my vision looked like this: Their breastplates were fiery red, dark blue, and yellow as sulfur. The heads of the horses resembled the heads of lions, and out of their mouths came fire, smoke and sulfur. A third of mankind was killed by the three plagues of fire, smoke and sulfur that came out of their mouths. The power of the horses was in their mouths and in their tails; for their tails were like snakes, having heads with which they inflict injury.**

**The rest of mankind who were not killed by these plagues still did not repent of the work of their hands; they did not stop worshiping demons, and idols of gold, silver, bronze, stone and wood—idols that cannot see or hear or walk. Nor did they repent of their murders, their magic arts, their sexual immorality or their thefts.**

**Revelation 9:13-21 (NIV)**

In the first half of **Revelation Chapter 9**, we see the wicked people of earth tortured for 5 months by a swarm of demonic locust. The misery will be so intense that *The Bible* says men will long for death (**vs.6**), but death has taken a holiday. In the second half of **Revelation 9**, we see the wish of those longing to die being granted for one third of the world’s population as the sixth seal is opened and another demonic horde is unleashed upon the earth.

The command to release the judgments of the sixth trumpet comes from the “four horns of the altar that is before the throne of God”. This is in reference to the altar of incense. In the book of *Exodus*, God commanded Moses to construct a small altar of wood overlaid with gold to be placed in front of the entrance to the Holy of Holies within the tabernacle. The priests were instructed to burn incense upon this altar to represent the prayers of the people going up to God as a sweet smelling fragrance.

The altar of incense had four protrusions that came out from the four corners of its top. These were called “the four horns of the altar”. Once a year, during Yom Kippur (The Day of Atonement), the High Priest would take some of the blood of the sacrifice and smear it upon the horns of the altar of incense. This is highly symbolic of Christ’s atoning death. For you see, if it were not for His blood, shed for us, then our prayers could never be answered.

It is also significant that the martyrs of the Tribulation were crying out for vengeance from underneath this altar. Their prayers for God’s judgment upon those who had so brutally murdered them rose up from the altar of incense and were heard by God. And it is at this predetermined moment in time when God Himself shall arise to answer the prayers of His saints. His vengeance shall be swift and terrible.

### **The Shackled (vs 13-15)**

When the sixth angel sounds his trumpet, an order is given from a Voice from the golden altar of incense. The command is given to release four angels, who had been bound at the river Euphrates until this exact appointed time (**vs. 14-15**). Since there is no *Biblical* record of God's holy angels being shackled for any reason, we must assume that these are fallen angels (demons), whom God has bound (for whatever reason) until such time as His command is issued to carry out His Sovereign will by bringing His judgment upon sinful mankind. It is interesting to note that even the enemies of God (for example; these demonic angels) can do nothing unless God allows it to be done. This, by definition, is True Sovereignty. Nothing can be done without the permission of our God. These fallen angels find themselves in the precarious position of doing the will of the very One Whom they rebelled against in the first place. How great is our God?

Some have speculated (and I concur) that these fallen angels are the very ones mentioned in the book of *Daniel*, who represent the demonic powers behind the four major world empires responsible for the persecution of Israel during the "times of the Gentiles". These empires are respectively; the Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Greek, and finally the Roman. The writings of the Prophet Daniel make it clear that each of these world empires were under the influence of demonic spirits (***Daniel 10***).

If these four angels are in fact the demons of Daniel's writings now being released at the sixth trumpet judgment, then it becomes apparent that following each of their respective ages of dominance over the empires of men, each angel was subsequently bound, only to be released once more to fulfill God's purpose at the appointed time of the Great Tribulation. As these demons are once again loosed, bent upon unleashing unimaginable horror upon all mankind, they will, in reality, be serving to fulfill God's promise of judgment upon the unrepentant of this earth. For even the demons of hell itself can do nothing more than what God will permit. He, being all-powerful, is able to bind and loose them at His Own discretion.

It is also interesting to note that the angels were bound at the Euphrates river. The Tigris and Euphrates rivers begin in the Armenian mountains and flow southward into what is now modern day Iraq. Between these two rivers is the fertile land known as Mesopotamia (land between the rivers). Mesopotamia is the very cradle of civilization. The place of Eden. The area where the first lie was told. The first murder was committed, and the tower of Babel was built. It is home to the great city of Babylon, the great antagonist of the people of God for generations.

In ***Zechariah 5:5-11***, it is Babylon that is designated as a haunt for all things evil. What a fitting place for the angels of destruction to be bound until they are released to command an army bent on the ruination of mankind. While we can only speculate as to the true identity of these four fallen angels, we do know that God has bound them until His appointed time and for His appointed purpose. And at the sounding of the sixth trumpet judgment, they will be summoned to lead an attack force of 200 million demonic soldiers to unleash hell upon the earth.

### **The Soldiers (vs. 16-19)**

***The number of the mounted troops was two hundred million; I heard their number.***  
***Rev 9:16 (CSB)***

John describes an army two hundred million strong. The word he uses for "army" (translated *troops* - NIV) is plural and should technically read "armies". This is probably a description assigning a group of soldiers under the command of each of the four fallen angels. There has been much speculation as to whether this army is human or demonic in nature. Many *Bible* scholars have suggested that this could be the Chinese army, which at one time boasted of being two hundred million strong. Perhaps this school of thought finds its origin in ***Revelation 16:12***, when the sixth bowl of wrath is poured out and dries up the Euphrates, allowing "Kings of the East" to advance into the great battle or Armageddon (**vs.16**).

I personally do not hold to this theory, but rather, subscribe to the opinion that this is an army of demons much like the demonic locusts of the first half of **Revelation 9**. Whatever the composition of this army may be, we are told that they will kill one third of all mankind. When this number is combined with the fourth of the population killed in the fourth seal judgment (**Revelation 6:8**), over half of the earth's population will have died by the end of the sixth trumpet judgment. And this figure does not even take into account the many other countless deaths as a result of all of the other "seal judgments" up to this point. To give a figure that most of us can understand, based on the current world population of approximately 7.7 billion, over 3.8 billion people would have perished by the end of the 6th trumpet judgment.

The demonic soldiers will destroy their targets with fire, smoke, and sulfur, which is released without mercy from the mouths of their "horses" (**vs. 17**). And in addition to these, the tails of these horrid beasts are as venomous snakes, unleashing devastating injuries to any who stand in their path. The breastplates of the riders are colored to match the description of the plagues they bring: blue-smoke, red-fire, and yellow-sulfur; as they unleash the very elements of hell itself upon the earth. This demonic host will bring death to many and terror to all. And yet, those who *are* able to survive the furious ride of death will still not be moved to repentance.

### **The Survivors (vs. 20-21)**

**The rest of mankind who were not killed by these plagues still did not repent of the work of their hands...** **Rev 9:20a**

It is hard to imagine the hardness of the unrepentant heart described in this verse. After all this unbelieving generation shall witness with their own eyes, they will still choose to despise God, rather than repent. It is important to know that behind every false religion of this world is none other than Satan himself. It is he who longs to entice men away from The One True God. And he will employ any means necessary in order to accomplish his evil intentions. If sinful temptation does not work, then false religion will do. This is why *The Bible* identifies all false religion as both adulterous and demonic.

After being savagely attacked by demonic forces, fallen mankind will continue to worship those same demons. Isn't that a graphic picture of this world's depravity? Men choose to worship (love and cherish) the very sin that is bent on destroying them, and yet, still refuse to repent. **Jeremiah 17:9** says, **"The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?"** How many times have we heard it said, "Just follow your heart?" Forget about all that. Follow Christ!! Your heart will blind you to sin and ultimately lead you to your own downfall.

There are 5 types of sin that are listed at the close of this chapter that the people of earth will refuse to turn away from in those days:

- 1) **Idolatry (vs. 20)** - The worship of anything other than the One True God (**Exodus 20:1-11**). This includes false religion, lust for pleasure or things, love of money or anything else that becomes the priority (god) of our life.
- 2) **Murder (vs. 21)** - It has been said that in the absence of God, life becomes cheap. In short, those who do not revere God certainly will not revere the life that He created. Men become as animals. The 6th Commandment (**Exodus 20:13**) will be replaced by the law of the jungle.
- 3) **Magic Arts (vs. 21)** - The Greek word used here is "*pharmakon*". It is where we get the English word "pharmacy". Do I need to elaborate any further to describe what people in the last days will use to escape the horror? Instead of getting right, the world will try to ease the pain by getting high.
- 4) **Sexual Immorality (vs. 21)** - The Greek word used here is "*pornea*", from which we derive the word pornography. The word is used in *The Bible* to describe any sexual activity outside the

bounds of a marriage between one man and one woman. Though the world may not like it, God has a design. And anything outside this design is wickedness. No matter the excuse, immorality will always be immorality, no matter how many parades are given in celebration of it by fallen man.

5) **Theft (vs. 21)** - Can you imagine how desperate people will be in these days just to find something to eat? In a world of endless disaster and total depravity, ownership of anything will be meaningless, unless you have sufficient power to fight off those who will try to take it. We are beginning to see in our time the rioting that ensues when an “entitled” society has some of its perks taken away. Imagine what it will be like in the last days when desperate and evil people are willing to do anything in order to survive.

This takes us to the end of the 6 trumpet judgments. Believe it or not, the worst is still yet to come. Do not let the sins of this world take you down with them. Become a follower of Jesus Christ and escape the coming wrath.

And let all the blood-washed saints say... TRUTH!!